

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 5 and amend claims 1-4, 6-12, 14 and 16-19 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) In a spray or hatch cover for boats, ~~e.g., kayaks,~~ having a pull tension element ~~that is a circumferential elastic band~~ provided at the edge of the cover for ~~simple release of~~ releasably holding the cover at the a collar ~~(coaming)~~ projecting ~~above~~ the boat body and surrounding an aperture to be covered,

the improvement wherein

the pull tension element ~~is a tightening strap that can be expanded by hand only with great difficulty, and wherein the pull tension element includes at least one manually-operable tightening device~~ fitting for tightening the ~~strap~~ tension element.

2. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, wherein the pull tension element includes two tightening ~~devices~~ fittings for tightening the ~~strap~~ tension element.

3. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 2, wherein a first tightening device fitting is located at a bow end of the spray cover in its attached position, and a second tightening device fitting is located at a stern end of the spray cover.

4. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, wherein the tightening device fitting is a tensioner.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 5 2, wherein each ~~adjusting device~~ tightening fitting includes a manually operable release mechanism for spontaneous extension or separation of the ~~tightening strap~~ tension element.

7. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 6, wherein a first ~~adjusting device~~ tightening fitting is located at a bow end of the spray cover in its attached position, and a second ~~adjusting device~~ tightening fitting is located at a stern end of the spray cover.

8. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, wherein the tightening device fitting is a pump clasp with a ratcheting strap working with it.

9. (Currently Amended) Spray cover as in Claim 1, further comprising a release ~~mechanism~~ device provided on the upper side of the spray cover that is located, when in the use position, above the legs of the person sitting under the spray cover, and is actuated by raising the legs, and ~~operates~~ acts upon an opening mechanism ~~to at~~ at least one of the tightening ~~and adjusting devices~~ fitting.

10. (Currently Amended) Spray cover as in Claim 9, wherein the release opening mechanism includes a release band device connected at both ends ~~to~~ of the spray cover, which in the use position of the spray cover ~~lies somewhat oblique to~~ is positioned above the legs of the person seated under the spray cover and has practically no slack, whereby and wherein the spray cover may be stretched out ~~oblique~~ in a direction perpendicular to its plane because of at least one of the elasticity of the material and its dimensions ~~that are~~ being greater than those of the aperture of the boat.

11. (Currently Amended) Spray cover as in Claim 10, further comprising a pull strap that extends from the release device to ~~at least one of the tightening device and adjusting device assigned to the opening mechanism and located at a stern end of the spray cover.~~

12. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, further comprising an additional rubber cord that is stretchable by hand is provided for ~~prior~~ preliminary positioning of the cover on the coaming.

13. (Previously Presented) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 12, wherein the rubber cord is stitched to the edge of the cover.

14. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, wherein the ~~tightening strap~~ tension element is held within a hollow cavity at the edge of the cover.

15. (Previously Presented) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 12, wherein the rubber cord is held by the seam that forms a hollow cavity at the edge of the cover.

16. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 12, wherein at least one of the rubber cord and ~~tightening~~

~~strap~~ tension element is shaped as a tube in whose interior the ~~tightening-strap~~ tension element and the rubber cord, respectively, extends.

17. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 12, wherein the ~~rubber-cord~~ tension element is held within a series of loops or rings at the edge of the cover.

18. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, further comprising a shaped piece associated with each tightening fitting which, in the use position of the cover, is inserted into the spray cover in use position between the tightening device fitting and the coaming, and whose shape is matched on the one side to the contour of the coaming, and on the other side to the shape of the tightening device fitting.

19. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, wherein the shape of the rear side of the tightening device fitting matches the shape of the coaming.